GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1829
ANSWERED ON:08.03.2016
Revamping of Consumer Fora
Chudasama Shri Rajeshbhai Naranbhai;Mahendran Shri C.;Mullappally Shri Ramachandran;Sonkar Shri Vinod Kumar;Tadas Shri Ramdas Chandrabhanji

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of cases are pending in Consumer Courts/Fora beyond the time stipulated in the Consumer Protection Act, 1984, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor indicating the number of functional Courts/Fora, cases registered and disposed during the last three years, State-wise;
(b) whether the Government proposes to set up a panel to suggest measures for revamping of the Consumer Courts/Fora, if so, the details thereof indicating the composition and terms of reference thereof;
(c) whether a number of sanctioned posts are lying vacant in the Consumer Courts/Fora, if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor along with the action taken to fill up these vacancies and set up additional Courts/Fora; and
(d) whether the Government proposes to take any concrete steps for speedy disposal of pending cases in Consumer Courts/Fora, if so, the details thereof and the time limit prescribed for their disposal?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN)

(a) : The number of functional and non-functional Consumer Fora are given at Annexure-I. The details of cases filed and disposed of in the Consumer Fora for the years 2013, 2014 and 2015 are at Annexure-II. The delay in disposal of cases in the Consumer Fora is due to several factors such as non-filling up the post of President & Members, shortage of support staff, lack of infrastructural facilities.

(b) : The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India vide order dated 14.1.2016 in Civil Appeal No. 2740/2007 has directed the Government to constitute a three member Committee to look into the deficiencies in the functioning of the Consumer Fora in the country and to recommend remedial measures. Accordingly, the Government has notified setting up of a Committee comprising Dr. Justice Arijit Pasayat, retired Supreme Court Judge as Chairman, Justice Rekha Sharma, retired Judge of Delhi High Court and Shri P.V.Rama Sastry, Joint Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, Government of India (representative of Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs). The terms of reference of the Committee is at Annexure-III.

(c) : The details of posts of President and Member lying vacant in Consumer Courts/ Fora is placed at Annexure IV. As per provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, it is the responsibility of the State/UT Governments to fill up the vacancies of President and Member in the State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission and the District Consumer Disputes Forum. The State Governments are asked from time to time to initiate action for filling up the vacancies well in time. In so far as the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission is concerned, the Central Government has already taken action for filling up of one existing and two anticipated vacancies of Member.

(d): As per Section 13(3A) of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, every complaint shall be heard as expeditiously as possible and endeavour shall be made to decide the complaint within a period of three months from the date of receipt of notice by opposite party where the complaint does not require analysis or testing of commodities and within five months, if it requires analysis or testing of commodities. The Government has already introduced the Consumer Protection Bill, 2015 in Lok Sabha proposing, inter alia, simplification of the adjudication process.

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